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- ◆ EU- Croatia Association Council
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THIRD COUNTRY MEETINGS

10-11 April 2005

- ◆ EU- African Union (Troika)

27 April 2005

- ◆ EU- Pakistan (Troika)

6-7 May 2005

- ◆ EU- Japan (Troika)

8-9 May 2005

- ◆ EU- China (Troika)

10 may 2005

- ◆ EU-Russia Summit

18 May 2005

- ◆ EU-ECOWAS (Troika)

26 may 2005

◆ **EU- Central America (Troika)**

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◆ **EU- Arab Group (Troika)**

◆ **EU- Israel (Troika)**

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT MEETINGS

◆ **Plenary Session**

➤ 11-14 April 2005

➤ 9-12 May 2005

◆ **Committee on Foreign Affairs**

➤ 19 April 2005

➤ 26 April 2005

➤ 23 May 2005

➤ 14 June 2005

◆ **Subcommittee on Human Rights**

➤ 25 April 2005

➤ 28 April 2005

➤ 16 June 2005

◆ **Subcommittee on Security and Defence**

➤ 18 April 2005

➤ 26 May 2005

➤ 16 June 2005

➤ 20 June 2005

◆ **Committee on Development**

➤ 23 May 2005

➤ 16 June 2005

➤ 20 June 2005

◆ **Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality**

- 19 April 2005
- 26 April 2005
- 26 May 2005
- 20 June 2005

◆ **Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs**

- 21 April 2005
- 25 April 2005
- 28 April 2005
- 24 May 2005
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- 20 June 2005

REGIONS:

AFRICA

♦ **European Union-African Union Ministerial Meeting Final communiqué**

▶ Terrorism (11.04.05)

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment and **determination to continue to co-operate in the global fight against terrorism**. The AU informed the EU on the **status of operationalisation of the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism**, and welcomed the EU's contribution in this regard. The EU expressed appreciation for the AU counter-terrorism policies, and in particular the AU appeal to its member **states to ratify and implement all relevant international instruments to combat terrorism**. The AU stressed the need to cooperate in the field of information exchange. The two parties undertook to cooperate in achieving a common position on the UN Convention against Terrorism.

▶ Human rights (11.04.05)

The two sides welcomed the entry into force of the Protocol establishing the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights and noted the decision of the AU Heads of State and Government on the merger of the African Court of Human and Peoples Rights with the African Court of Justice for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness. They also agreed to work together to strengthen the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights in supervising the implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights.

Ministers reiterated **the importance of the International Criminal Court in the global fight against genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity**.

The African side stressed the importance of providing adequate support to facilitate voluntary repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons and to ensure the sustainability of democracy and good governance through their full participation in elections and socio-economic development.

<http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/communiques/2005/04/11ue-ua-final/index.html> (EN)

♦ **Guinea**

▶ 2652ème session du Conseil - Procédure de consultation au titre de l'accord ACP-UE (15.04.05)

Le Conseil a adopté une décision clôturant la procédure de consultations avec la République de Guinée concernant les droits de l'homme, les principes démocratiques et l'État de droit dans ce pays (article 96 de l'Accord ACP UE)(7367/05, 7440/1/05).

La décision incorpore une lettre destinée au Premier Ministre guinéen dans laquelle l'UE exprime ses attentes vis à vis des engagements pris par le gouvernement guinéen concernant principalement:

- la révision du cadre électoral;
- le respect des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales;
- l'autorisation pour la mise en place des médias électroniques privés avant les élections locales prévues pour juin 2005;

– la poursuite du processus de décentralisation et des mesures renforçant la gestion macro économique et les réformes sectorielles.

À la suite des consultations et compte tenu des progrès réalisés à ce stade et des activités encore à mettre en œuvre, il a été décidé d'arrêter les mesures suivantes, au titre de l'article 96 de l'accord de Cotonou:

- la coopération est poursuivie sur les reliquats du Fonds européen de développement (FED);
- des programmes visant le renforcement de la société civile, le respect et le renforcement de la démocratie, des droits de l'homme, de la bonne gouvernance et de la consolidation de médias libres peuvent aussi être soutenus;
- les contributions aux projets régionaux seront examinées au cas par cas;
- les actions à caractère humanitaire et la coopération commerciale seront poursuivies.

L'UE continuera à suivre de près la situation en Guinée. Un dialogue politique renforcé sera maintenu en vue de consolider la démocratie et l'État de droit, en particulier par la tenue des élections législatives prévues pour 2007, ainsi que le respect des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales.

http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.ASP?id=1&lang=en&mode=g (FR)

◆ Libya

- ▶ **EU ministers warned against a migration deal with Libya** By Lucia Kubosova (14.04.05)

International organisations are warning about the **poor record of human rights protection in Libya**, as EU justice and home affairs ministers meet on Thursday (14 April) to debate a deal with Tripoli on the **deportation of illegal migrants** back to the country.

Ministers are set to discuss the EU's future cooperation with Libya on the basis of a Commission report following its mission to Tripoli late last year.

Libya has currently no formal relations with the EU, while only nine member states have their embassies in the country's capital of Tripoli.

However, **Brussels has made clear it could include Libya in the framework of its neighbourhood policy, leading to more economic cooperation, as long as its government proceeds with political reforms.**

No guarantee of refugee rights in Libya

Some EU member states are pushing for closer links with the country in the area of migration.

However, **human activists argue that there are currently no guarantees of refugee rights in Libya.**

"People forcibly returned to Libya from Europe risk **degrading detention conditions and further expulsion to countries where they may face imprisonment and torture**", according to Dick Oosting, Director of Amnesty International's EU Office.

"In this context, deportations of 'irregular migrants' to Libya as carried out repeatedly by EU Member States, in particular by Italy and Malta, should be immediately halted as these removals may be in breach of Member States' obligations under international law", Mr Oosting said in a statement.

Amnesty International warns that the continuation of such procedures would "in fact undermine the credibility of the EU's own 'Barcelona Process' with Mediterranean countries which, among other things, aims to enhance the respect for human rights throughout the region".

A scandal

A similar message has been expressed by the European Parliament.

As part of its Strasbourg session this week, **MEPs will discuss a motion condemning the breach of the Refugee Convention in cases of migrant deportations to Libya.**

Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP (ALDE) has pointed out that "Denying migrants a chance to have their claim for refugee status assessed, and expelling them into Gaddafi's tender care, is a scandal".

She suggested that Commission Vice-President Franco Frattini, responsible for the justice and home

affairs portfolio, should be more outspoken about the countries carrying out such deportations to Libya.

"Instead of silently colluding, he should be taking them to the European Court of Justice", said Baroness Ludford.

<http://www.euobserver.com/?sid=9&aid=18852> (EN)

AMERICAS

◆ Guyana

- ▶ Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the reinstatement of the Guyana's Minister of Home Affairs in his functions (13.04.05)

"The European Union has taken note of the report of the Commission of Inquiry into allegations that **Minister of Home Affairs Ronald Gajraj was involved in extra-judicial killings**. The report, while finding no credible evidence that Mr Gajraj was so involved, criticises him for intruding "unlawfully" in the issue of gun licences and for an "unhealthy" association with a known murderer.

The European Union wishes to inform the Government of Guyana of its disappointment and disquiet that, **in spite of these criticisms, Mr Gajraj has been reinstated and has resumed responsibility for the Guyana Police Force.**"

<http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/pesc/2005/04/13Guyana/index.html> (EN)

ASIA

◆ China

- ▶ EU ministers expected to postpone the lifting of China arms embargo - By Lucia Kubosova (15.04.05)

Under growing pressure from the US, the European Parliament and several member states, EU foreign ministers are expected to affirm **the China arms embargo would not be lifted this year**.

Foreign ministers will discuss the EU's relations with China at their informal meeting in Luxembourg, starting on Friday (15 April).

The arms embargo was originally planned to be raised in late May, but member states have not reached the unanimity needed for such a decision.

Instead, **they will call on Beijing to improve its human rights record and seek a peaceful solution in its dispute with Taiwan**, according to the Guardian.

British authorities, due to take over from the Luxembourg EU presidency in July, are not expected to put the issue on the agenda during their period at the EU's helm.

The move comes after strong pressure from Washington and international NGOs, voicing their concerns over China's undemocratic rule and its recently adopted "anti-secession law", viewed as justifying the use of force against separatist initiatives in Taiwan.

The US Congress has urged the Bush administration to keep up the pressure on the Europeans.

Henry Hyde, head of the US international relations committee, said on Thursday (14 April), the Europeans' bid to get rid of the ban is "the latest manifestation of a misguided European security policy championed not by all Europeans, but by a few vocal governments who believe it is Europe's destiny to 'balance' the interests of the US around the world, all the more in instances where there is money to be made," according to the Financial Times.

The European parliamentarians have also pointed out their opposition.

By 431 votes in favour to 85 votes against with 31 abstentions, they supported an own initiative report by Elmar Brok (EPP-ED, DE) which calls on the EU Council of Ministers not to lift the arms embargo against China.

Instead, MEPs insisted on a binding EU code on arms exports.

They also showed their "regrets that relations with China have made progress only in the trade and economic fields, without any substantial achievement as regards human rights and democracy issues."

<http://www.euobserver.com/?sid=9&aid=18863> (EN)

◆ Bangladesh

▶ Bomb attacks in Bangladesh (14.04.05)

By 92 votes in favour to 2 against with 3 abstentions, Parliament adopted a resolution on Bangladesh, in which it condemns the repeated bomb attacks and urges the Government of Bangladesh to ensure that international investigators assisting Bangladesh's intelligence forces will have full access to all evidence regarding the attacks in accordance with the government's own promises, and urges the Government of Bangladesh to publish the investigation report in full. **It urges the Government of Bangladesh to respect the instructions given by its High Court to avoid abuse of legal instruments in detaining opposition demonstrators and to refrain from repressing peaceful political protests through means of detention and torture.** MEPs further urge the Government of Bangladesh, in particular, to **put an end to the anti-crime operations by the paramilitary forces RAB (Rapid Action Battalion), which come down to extrajudicial killings;** points out that the reputed human rights organisation ODHIKAR has stated that there were **90 publicly reported custodial deaths due to torture in 2004.** They encourage the Government of Bangladesh to enable the population to participate in traditional cultural events and to provide security measures in order that these events, which reflect a tradition of tolerance and secularism can be implemented safely. Parliament also calls for the Government of Bangladesh to take preventive steps against Muslim paramilitary groups which have spread violence and intimidation in rural areas of Bangladesh.

MEPs reiterate their support for the demand that those known to have participated in the massacre of Bangladeshi citizens and other war crimes during the Bangladeshi liberation war of 1971 be brought to trial. They consider that, in view of the parliamentary elections scheduled for late 2006/early 2007, **systemic reforms are necessary in order to re-establish the principles of good governance, (...)**

The House expresses its **support for the principled steps which EU representatives have taken during the last year in defence of the rights of religious minorities in Bangladesh,** such as their physical presence at a complex of the Ahmadiyya Muslims, in October 2004, when fundamentalists had prepared to stage a mass assault on the complex. **It calls on the Council to review the application of the human rights and democracy clause of the EU-Bangladesh Cooperation Agreement and to ascertain whether the Government of Bangladesh is making sufficiently strong efforts to fundamentally improve the human rights situation.**

Finally, **Parliament notes recent modest steps taken by the Government of Bangladesh to improve the political situation in the country, will encourage the Government of Bangladesh to establish a situation respectful of law and order and will support any substantial progress on issues like good governance, freedom of press, the fight against corruption and respect for human rights.**

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+DN-20050414-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION10> (EN)

EUROPE (OUTSIDE OF UE) AND CIS

◆ Republic of Albania

- ▶ The European Community and the Republic of Albania sign an agreement regarding the readmission of illegal residents (14.04.05)

The agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Albania, regarding the readmission of illegal residents, was signed on the occasion of the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 14 April 2005 in Luxembourg. In order to continue advancing on the path towards the "Process of Stabilisation and Association" (PSA) (negotiations were initiated with Albania since 31 January 2003 in view of the adoption of a stabilisation and association agreement), **the European Community stressed the importance for Albania to undertake major and urgent reforms, particularly against organized crime, trafficking, and corruption; to strengthen the judicial system and public administration; to ensure the proper operation of democracy and preserve the political stability needed to rapidly implement reforms; to improve human and minority rights; to better normalise the economy and reform it; and to increase the viability of the budget situation by setting up more effective custom and tax administrations and a stronger legal framework.**

As a general principle, this agreement states that each contracting State shall readmit within its borders its own nationals, who have been illegally residing in another contracting State. Thus, the goal of the readmission agreement is to define the practical terms and conditions for readmission.

<http://www.eu2005.lu/en/actualites/communiqués/2005/04/14jai-albanie/index.html> (EN)

THEMATIC :

JUSTICE AND HOME AFFAIRS

◆ Criminal Justice

- ▶ MEPs push for better standards of criminal justice in Europe (12.04.05)

Parliament adopted, by 523 votes in favour to 68 against with 13 abstentions, a report calling for better standards of criminal justice in the different Member States. **With this consultation report MEPs give their support to the draft Decision on procedural safeguards for suspects and defendants in criminal proceedings by identifying five areas in which common standards may be applied by all Member States to protect the rights of suspected persons: *the right to immediate access to a lawyer; access to interpretation or translation so that they enjoy the same standard of legal treatment as they would at home; ensuring that persons in need of specific attention because they are unable to follow the proceedings receive it; consular assistance to foreign detainees and notifying suspects and defendants of their rights in writing.***

Under the new EU Constitution, all Member States will have to abide by judgements handed down by other national legal systems within the EU. At the same time, membership of the EU will entail an obligation to treat all European citizens "in a comparable fashion", a principle which will also apply to judicial proceedings.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+DN-20050412-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION7> (EN)

Full text of the draft decision:

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=95213&LEVEL=2&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

◆ Torture

- ▶ Council of Europe Anti-Torture Committee publishes Czech response on follow-up given to Committee's recommendations (14.04.05)

In a follow-up response published today with its agreement, the Czech Government provides additional information concerning the implementation of recommendations of the European Committee for the prevention of torture (CPT) after a visit to the Czech Republic in April 2002. In its visit report, the CPT focussed on the **safeguards offered to persons detained by the police** and examined, for the first time in the Czech Republic, the **conditions of stay in holding facilities for foreigners**, as well as the **treatment of psychiatric patients**.

Building on its initial response, which covered the period 2003, the Czech Government indicates the steps taken in the year 2004 to further implement the CPT's recommendations and highlights planned action for the future.

The CPT's visit report and the initial Czech response (published on 12 March 2004), as well as the follow-up report of the Czech authorities, are available on the CPT's website: <http://www.cpt.coe.int> <http://www.cpt.coe.int/documents/cze/2005-04-14-eng.htm> (EN)

- ▶ Council of Europe Anti-Torture Committee visits Hungary (12.04.05)

A delegation of the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) recently carried out a ten-day visit to Hungary. The visit, which began on 30 March 2005, was the Committee's third periodic visit to Hungary.

During the visit, the CPT's delegation followed up a number of issues examined during previous visits, in particular the **holding of remand prisoners on police premises**, the **treatment of foreign nationals held under the aliens legislation**, as well as the **situation in prisons and social care homes**. The delegation also visited for the first time the only **high-security psychiatric hospital** in Hungary, accommodating patients undergoing compulsory psychiatric treatment by court order.

<http://www.cpt.coe.int/documents/hun/2005-04-12-eng.htm> (EN)

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

◆ Barcelona Process

- ▶ Commission launches 5-year work programme to reinforce Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (12.04.05)

The European Commission today unveiled a wide-ranging work programme to reinforce the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona Process) over the next five years. In a Communication to the Council and Parliament, **the Commission outlined proposals for concrete progress in three areas critical for the future of the region: Education, Sustainable Economic Growth; and Human Rights and Democracy**. In addition to these priority areas, the work programme also covers social reforms, environment, migration, weapons of mass destruction and counter-terrorism. The Commission Work Programme provides an agenda for discussion on the way forward for the Barcelona Process in its 10th anniversary year, both at the Euromed Foreign Ministers' meeting in Luxembourg in May, and the special anniversary conference in Barcelona in November (...)

Political reform is the key to achieving sustainable security and stability. **The Commission seeks a new focus within the Euro-Med partnership on issues such as protection of human rights, empowerment of women, strengthening of democracy, pluralism and independent judiciary**. The Commission proposes greater cooperation in these fields, including:

* A new Democracy Facility to support those partners who show a clear commitment to political reform (...)

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/419&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (EN)

◆ International Trade

▶ NGOs mourn EU trade policy - By Filipe Rufino and Meghan Sapp (15.04.05)

The EU's controversial Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) talks with Africa, Pacific, and Caribbean (ACP) countries came under fire again on Thursday (14 April).

The EU sees the EPAs as a viable alternative to the existing Cotonou Agreement, which it signed with 77 ACP countries in June 2000.

The World Trade Organisation said the Cotonou deal is illegal and that the EU has a predatory attitude toward developing countries seeking special trade relationships with Europe.

NGOs have also poured scorn on the EPA scheme.

"If the EU wants to help poor countries and doesn't want them to have to reduce tariffs (as part of WTO negotiations), then why are they asking for it under the EPAs?" said Martin Khor, director of Third World Network, at a debate in Brussels on Thursday.

The Brussels-based think tank, The Centre, organised the discussion as part of the "Global Week of Action on Trade" which seeks to develop support for "fair trade" rather than "free trade."

NGOs are trying to put forward ideas for trade rules that help developing countries become more competitive, rather than forcing them to compete with developed countries before they are ready.

The campaign comes in the run up to the WTO's next major meeting at the end of this year in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong session will be the organization's first major get-together since developing countries rallied round to sabotage the Cancun talks in 2003 (...)

Some European and Belgian NGOs, including Christian Aid and Oxfam International, organised a funeral procession around the EU district in Brussels before the debate on Thursday (...)

"Free trade is not working and the international institutions should stop forcing it," said Martin Gordon of Christian Aid at a press conference before the event.

"The trade policies of EU governments and the European Commission are devastating poor communities the world over," he added.

Kingsley Ofei-Nkansah, from Ghana's General Agricultural Workers Union (GAWU), pointed out that his country, "used to produce its own food, but is now selling its agricultural produce, which is being undermined by cheap canned imports from EU countries."

Traditional rice, chicken and tomato farmers in developing countries are powerless to compete against mass-produced and state-subsidised EU and US firms under the WTO status quo, the protestors claimed.

Free trade takes 1.9 billion euro a day out of the pockets of poor countries, which amounts to 14 times what they receive in aid, the NGO meeting heard.

But supporters of the new EPA deals say they will help keep western countries out of domestic markets in the developing world.

Roger Liddle, a senior member on trade commissioner Peter Mandelson's cabinet, countered that the agreements would allow for outside investment into developing economies and that increased EU access would come only after a long transition period.

He added that there are no industry lobbyists "knocking down his door" for access to ACP markets today. "We want to encourage countries to adopt the EU model," said Mr Liddle.

<http://www.euobserver.com/?sid=19&aid=18864> (EN)